

REMARKS

In the October 18, 2006 Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 1-4 and 9-13 were pending in the application and were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a). In rejecting the claims, U.S. Patents 5,440,624 to Schoof, II; 5,237,499 to Garback; (References A and C, respectively in the March 15, 2004 Office Action); and 6,052,680 to Towell (Reference C in the August 25, 2005 Office Action) were cited. Claims 1-4 and 9-13 remain in the case. The rejections are traversed below.

Rejections under 35 USC § 103(a)

On pages 2-4 of the Office Action, claims 1, 2 and 9-13 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) over Schoof, II in view of Towell. As in the August 25, 2005 and March 7, 2006 Office Actions, column 8, line 5 and Figs. 2, 5 and 6 of Towell were cited in rejecting claim 1. The entire cited line of Towell reads "[i]n the following, an exemplary system for determining". Therefore, (as discussed in the previous two Amendments) based on the quotation marks on pages 3-4 of the Office Action, it will be assumed that the Examiner intended to cite column 8, lines 5-27 of Towell. This paragraph describes a method for "determining whether to route an incoming e-mail to a rule-based system" (column 8, lines 5-6) for "a text to word list translation process" (column 8, line 10) illustrated in Fig. 2. The details illustrated in Fig. 6 all relate to operations on words in e-mails. **If the claims continue to be rejected over Towell, the Examiner is respectfully requested to correctly indicate what is being cited in Towell.**

As described at column 5, line 59 to column 6, line 42 of Towell, Fig. 5 is an illustration of the following steps: "determining a relevance value of a preprocessed input message with respect to a decision system, applying a relevance parameter(s) to the determined relevance value, and invoking the decision system if the relevance value meets the relevance parameter(s)" (column 5, lines 60-64). In step 506, "a distance between the vectors is determined ..., [where] the greater the distance between the vectors, the less relevant the message is to the decision system" (column 6, lines 23-25). Step 510 in the flowchart illustrated in Fig. 5 compares the vector distance with a threshold and "if the distance is greater than the predetermined threshold value (assuming higher distance value corresponds to a higher relevance as is the case with a cosine distance value), the input message is provided to the decision system" (column 6, lines 37-41).

As discussed in the Amendment filed July 7, 2006 (which was entered by the Request for Continued Examination filed August 7, 2006), there is nothing in the portion of Towell quoted

by the Examiner, or the above-quoted more descriptive portions of Towell, that suggests basing a decision on any the following factors: "a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterance objects in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion" (e.g., claim 1, lines 4-7). Since all of the independent claims contain this list of bases for judging whether to conduct a face-to-face discussion, it is submitted that claims 1, 2 and 9-13 patentably distinguish over Schoof, II in view of Towell.

In the Response to Arguments section of the March 7 and October 18, 2006 Office Actions, it was asserted that column 8, lines 11-18 of Towell teaches a "cosine distance [that] is the index" (October 18, 2006 Office Action, page 6, line 15) which is used when "the system determines whether to hold a face-to-face meeting" (Office Action, page 6, line 16, citing column 8, lines 53-59 of Towell). In addition, column 6, lines 13-32 of Towell was cited as disclosing that "the system calculates the index ... by comparing the incoming message's words with a predetermined word list" (October 18, 2006 Office Action, page 6, lines 17-18).

The statements in Towell quoted in the preceding paragraph indicate why Towell does **not** disclose the claimed invention. As described in the preceding paragraph, Towell teaches calculating a cosine distance between words in an incoming message and a predetermined word list and using the cosine distance as an index to determine whether to hold a face-to-face meeting. As discussed in the April 7, 2006 Amendment, the "cosine index" is not a measure of the number of words *per se*, let alone what is recited in the independent claims, but rather the "cosine index" indicates how many of the words in a word list on a specific subject, i.e. scheduling a meeting or requesting product information, are in a message. Thus, the cosine index represents a guess at the content of a message, not the number of words in the message and certainly not the number of statements made or even messages received in "a discussion at an electronic conference" (e.g., claim 1, line 2) or in any other context. Thus adding the teachings of Towell to those of Schoof, II does not teach or suggest any of the factors recited on lines 4-7 of claim 1.

An index generated in the manner taught by Towell is none of "a number of speakers in the discussion, a number of utterance objects in the discussion, a depth of a tree structure of the information stored about the discussion and a data amount of the information stored about the discussion" (e.g., claim 1, lines 4-7). The cosine distance calculated in the method taught by Towell indicates a difference between words in an e-mail and predetermined words. The cosine distance used as an index in Towell is something completely different from the list of

different types of data that can be used as an index in the independent claims. Nothing has been cited or found in the cited prior art suggesting that something other than the cosine distance between two different groups of words could be used in "deciding to hold a face-to-face conference if the index exceeds a specific value" (e.g., claim 1, last 2 lines).

For the above reasons, it is submitted that claim 1 and claims 9-13, all of which recite the same list of bases for "judging whether to hold a face-to-face conference" (e.g., claim 10, lines 7), as well as claim 2 which depends from claim 1, patentably distinguish over Schoof, II in view of Towell.

On pages 4 and 5 of the October 18, 2006 Office Action, claims 3 and 4 were rejected under 35 USC § 103(a) as unpatentable over Schoof, II in view of Towell and further in view of Garback. Nothing was cited or has been found in Garback suggesting modification of the method of routing "an incoming e-mail to a rule-based system" disclosed by Towell to a method of determining when to hold a face-to-face conference based on any of the factors recited on lines 4-7 of claim 1. Since claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 1, it is submitted that claims 3 and 4 patentably distinguish over Schoof, II, Towell and Garback for the reasons discussed above with respect to claim 1.

Summary

It is submitted that the references cited by the Examiner do not teach or suggest the features of the present claimed invention. Thus, it is submitted that claims 1-4 and 9-13 are in a condition suitable for allowance. Reconsideration of the claims and an early Notice of Allowance are earnestly solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

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If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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